

Complaint Confidentiality

Under Arkansas law, materials filed with the Commission and its proceedings remain confidential unless formal charges are filed.

A judge may learn the complainant's identity during the investigation, and the complainant may need to testify if a hearing is held.

Preliminary hearings are normally closed to the public, and the Commission does not reveal the existence or details of an investigation.

Limits of the Commission's Authority

The Commission cannot act on complaints based solely on a judge's rulings or use of discretion.

Personal dissatisfaction with a case outcome is not sufficient for a judicial investigation. Such matters are handled by the state's appellate courts.

Complainants should continue with any appeals if needed, even while the Commission investigates a judicial complaint.

Legal Guidance

The Commission staff cannot provide legal advice. If you need guidance on your case or next steps, you should consult a licensed attorney.

Complaint on an Attorney

Complaints regarding attorney misconduct should be directed to:

Office of Professional Conduct
One Capitol Mall, Suite 3D-101 Little Rock, AR
72201
Phone: 501-376-0313

Our Contact



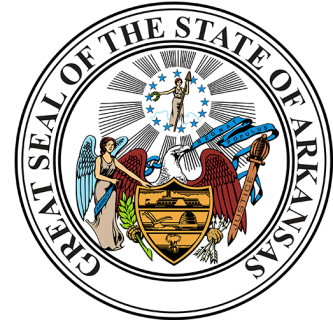
**323 Center Street, Suite 1060
Little Rock, AR 72201**

Phone: 501-682-1050

Fax: 501-682-1049

Email: jddc@arkansas.gov

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STATE OF ARKANSAS



JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE & DISABILITY COMMISSION

Information Guide

Hours of Operation:

Monday- Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION



The Judicial Discipline & Disability Commission was created in 1988 through Arkansas Constitutional Amendment 66. It investigates complaints of judicial misconduct and, when appropriate, recommends action to the Arkansas Supreme Court, which can suspend, remove, retire, or censure a judge. The Commission itself may also issue public discipline.

Most Arkansas judges serve with honesty, fairness, and respect. However, a trusted process for handling misconduct is essential to:

- Preserve the integrity of the courts
- Maintain public confidence in the judiciary
- Promote awareness of proper judicial behavior

The Commission is made up of 18 members:

- 9 Investigative Members – review complaints and decide whether formal charges should be filed.
- 9 Hearing Members – serve on a separate panel that conducts hearings if charges are brought.

Members include judges, attorneys, and public representatives appointed by state leaders to ensure a balanced and impartial process.

MISCONDUCT THAT MAY LEAD TO DISCIPLINE



Improper Courtroom Conduct

- Rude, abusive, or disrespectful behavior toward parties, attorneys, witnesses, jurors, court staff, or others
- Failing to handle judicial business promptly
- Inappropriate or unusual behavior on the bench, such as sleeping or being intoxicated
- Showing bias based on gender, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics

Improper Influence

- Letting family, social, or political relationships affect judicial decisions
- Conflicts of interest
- Giving or receiving gifts, bribes, loans, or favors
- Misusing the power of contempt
- Interfering with attorney-client relationships
- Communicating improperly with only one side in a case
- Commenting on or influencing pending or upcoming lawsuits

Other Improper or Illegal Activities (On or Off the Bench)

- Engaging in improper political campaign activities
- Misusing public property, funds, or resources
- Violating court administration rules
- Obstructing justice, committing perjury, or filing false documents
- Ticket-fixing
- Criminal behavior outside of court

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



What the Commission Can Do

The Commission investigates complaints against judges and may take disciplinary action if a judge violates the Code of Judicial Conduct. In serious cases, it can recommend discipline to the Arkansas Supreme Court.

Disciplinary actions, from least to most severe, include:

- Informal adjustment (such as counseling or assistance)
- Public admonishment
- Reprimand
- Censure

For stronger action, the Supreme Court may impose:

- Suspension
- Removal
- Involuntary retirement

How Complaints Are Handled

Complaints are reviewed by Commission staff. Cases within the Commission's jurisdiction are investigated, and findings are presented to the Commission.

The Commission may:

- Dismiss a complaint
- Conduct a preliminary investigation, which may lead to a formal hearing

Complainants are notified by letter about the status and outcome of their complaint.